

**Opening Statement**  
**The Honorable Doug Lamborn (R-CO)**  
**Chairman**  
**House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee**  
**Legislative Hearing on HR 4465 (Curtis)**  
***“Endangered Species Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017”***  
**December 6, 2017**

Today we will consider H.R. 4465, the “Endangered Species Fish Recovery Program Extension Act of 2017” sponsored by our new colleague from Utah, John Curtis, and joined by a bipartisan group of co-sponsors from the affected states, including myself.

Authorized in 1956, the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP- ***“CRISP”***), paved the way for the development and utilization of the water resources in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. With a total storage capacity of more than 30 million acre-feet, and the capability to generate over 5 billion megawatt-hours of energy annually, the CRSP is vital to the economies of the Upper Basin States.

Fourteen native fish species – including four listed as ‘endangered’ under the Endangered Species Act—also call the Basin home. The threat of water and power restrictions resulting from these listings prompted the States to enter into cooperative agreements with the Federal government, Tribes and other non-federal partners to ensure the continued reliability of these projects. These agreements eventually led to the creation of the Upper Colorado and San Juan Recovery Implementation Programs.

The 106<sup>th</sup> Congress enacted legislation to establish federal participation and non-federal cost share, including the authority to use CRSP power revenues, to support these two programs. These agreements continue to ensure ESA compliance for the more than 2,300 water and power projects in the five-state region, while also promoting the goals of recovery for the four endangered fish species.

In 2012, Congress reauthorized the authorization of the agreement and the use of these revenues through 2019, but also included important reforms to reduce overhead expenses and agency travel in order to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being devoted to fish recovery – not federal bureaucrats. This reauthorization continues this congressional oversight to ensure that the program is transparent and trending towards recovery of the species.

H.R. 4465 extends the use of CRSP power revenues to be used through 2023, which also happens to fall in line with the recovery deadline for these programs. In addition, the bill requires a report to ensure that expenditures and actions are helping to recover these species.

We must not lose sight of the end goal of this program; recover and get these four species delisted. I am hopeful that at the conclusion of this reauthorization we will have accomplished that goal.

Before I conclude, I would like to welcome Mr. Andy Colosimo back to the Committee. Andy, from my home state of Colorado. Andy has more than 30 years of experience at the local, state and federal level dealing with these issues and worked on the original enacting legislation for this recovery program as a staffer in the Senate.

I would also like to extend a special welcome to our new colleague, Congressman John Curtis of Utah. As former Mayor of Provo, Utah, Congressman Curtis knows firsthand how these ground-up, collaborative programs create certainty for water and power users and support local economic activity. Without the threat of litigation, through this program the CRSP has achieved a balance between supporting species and local communities.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being with us today and I look forward to hearing from you all. Due to a conflict with another hearing that is happening on the Senate side this morning the Administration is unable to be here today, but we appreciate their willingness to submit a statement for the official hearing record.